

Preface

Sustainability and environmental awareness are key issues globally and the library world is committed to playing its part in protecting the planet. Implementing sustainable strategies is now well established in many libraries but the new book published on behalf of IFLA's Environment, Sustainability and Libraries Section (ENSULIB) together with IFLA's Library Buildings and Equipment Section (LBES) takes the concept one step further. Sensitively transforming existing historic buildings into exciting, functional and beautiful libraries is both challenging and fulfilling.

Introductory essays on the sustainability of reusing historic buildings and on the building types that lend themselves to transformation into 21st century libraries are followed by case studies of both public and academic libraries from all over the world. A key feature of the book is that the projects are discussed from the perspective of both architects and librarians.

A wide range of creative adaptations is discussed covering a broad diversity of building typologies and constructions and different historical epochs. All case studies demonstrate that the reuse of existing buildings contributes to a mix of social and urban renewal and sustainability and also constitutes an undeniably effective and successful way of designing attractive and efficient modern libraries. The descriptions of combinations of historic buildings with innovative interventions for targeted final use as thoroughly modern libraries provide new insights into building reuse.

What Ton van Vlimmeren, Director of the Utrecht Public Library and President of the European Bureau of Library Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA), noted in an interview in June 2020 is pertinent and relevant beyond the Netherlands:

In the Netherlands, more and more libraries are re-locating to already existing buildings, which are restored and adapted to new needs. The trend is no longer to create stand-alone facilities but to include fresh new constructions in the centre of cities. I am referring to important experiences in the new libraries of Groningen, Arnhem, Amsterdam and Rotterdam, without forgetting Tilburg. Another trend is to work with external partners and volunteer organisations. When libraries liaise with other organisations, their activities are factors of attraction for the public and reinforce library image and action. (<https://mailchi.mp/c49ed69117ea/ebilda-newsletter-4193293#tvv>)

The book is divided into three main parts. The first part provides overviews of creative building reuse and outlines the challenges and issues. The second part provides case studies of public libraries which have emerged from buildings with multiple former uses. The third part provides details of academic libraries created

from buildings no longer serving their original purposes. An appendix contains a review of selected documents about reuse of buildings for libraries as a question of sustainability.

The first part introduces readers to the concepts, challenges, considerations and concerns associated with creative building reuse. Perspectives are provided by two architects with longstanding experience in library design and a person with both library and architecture experience. Robert Niess addresses the architectural perspective; Santi Romero examines the typology of historic buildings and associated issues in repurposing them as libraries; and Karen Latimer focuses on sustainability issues in reusing buildings.

Case studies on successful projects developing new public libraries from buildings with a chequered and varied past present examples from Australia, Canada, China, Finland, Germany, Spain and the Netherlands. They showcase the transformation of buildings with wide-ranging previous roles and include a hospital, two abandoned fire halls, a traditional Chinese courtyard house, 17th century barns, former industrial buildings and factories, a locomotive shed, a grocery store and a post office.

Case studies from academic libraries include examples from Belgium, Colombia, France, Germany, Italy and the United States. Buildings previously functioning as factories, a research institute, cattle market, Rococo castle, locomotive factory building, university restaurant, slaughterhouse and chapel demonstrate outstanding examples of creative and adaptive reuse as libraries.

The final Appendix offers a review of some selected documents and the book includes a list of contributors.

The editors thank everyone involved in this book for their effort and hard work which made the project possible: particularly the authors of the chapters but also the photographers for providing their contributions.

We thank the IFLA Library Buildings and Equipment Section for willingly accepting and indeed drawing under their umbrella one more ENSULIB publication on sustainable, green libraries.

A big thank you goes to Claudia Heyer and the publishing house De Gruyter Saur, for encouraging us to realise the publication and including it in their programme.

Last but not least, ENSULIB and the editors thank IFLA, especially Janine Schmidt, the IFLA Publication Series Editor, for her encouragement and checking of the text; and the Professional Committee for supporting publication of *New Libraries in Old Buildings: Creative Reuse*. In particular, we thank the Professional Committee for the decision to provide funding to enable open access publication which constitutes a first for the IFLA Publication Series and provides wider access to the content.

It is hoped that the book will provide inspiration and guidance for others to follow.

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